



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

PO Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

928 638-7779 phone  
928 638-7609 fax  
[www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca)

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## Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

Contact(s): Shannan Marcak  
Phone number: 928-638-7958  
Date: May 1, 2009

### Phase I Construction of Grand Canyon's South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan Begins

**Grand Canyon, AZ.** – Construction began this week on visitor improvements outlined in Grand Canyon National Park's South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan. The improvements will address significant parking shortages which are causing resource degradation issues, safety risks due to pedestrian/vehicular conflicts at and around Mather Point, and difficulty accessing the Grand Canyon Visitor Center (Visitor Center) located at Canyon View Information Plaza (CVIP).

The improvements in the CVIP and Mather Point areas will be completed in two phases. Phase I will primarily focus on parking improvements in the CVIP area and Phase II, which will begin following completion of Phase I, will focus on improvements in the Mather Point area.

Construction on Phase I began this week and is expected to be completed by November 2009. Phase I improvements include:

- realignment of the South Entrance Road to loop around CVIP to the south and west;
- three new visitor parking lots with which will provide parking for up to 600 vehicles;
- a new parking lot which will provide parking for 40 commercial tour buses;
- a new shuttle bus staging area at the existing Visitor Center area transit pavilion;
- improvements to manage storm water; and
- extensive revegetation of areas to be restored.

During the entire construction project, visitors will continue to have access to the Mather Point area, the park's Visitor Center, and the Grand Canyon Association's Books and More bookstore at CVIP. The park's accessible shuttle bus system will continue to stop at CVIP and parking will continue to be available in the CVIP area for commercial tour buses. Intermittent traffic delays and some periodic vehicular and pedestrian detours can be expected during construction. Alternate routes and parking locations will be signed accordingly; and the National Park Service will make every effort to provide advance notice of traffic changes to lessen any impacts to visitors.

In order to minimize construction impacts, Phase I construction will be completed in two stages. Stage 1 construction began this week and is expected to be completed by August 2009. Stage 1 will include the realignment of the South Entrance Road, the construction of the commercial tour

bus parking lot and the construction of the first of three private vehicle parking lots. (*See attached 1<sup>st</sup> Stage map*).

During Stage 1 construction:

- commercial tour buses will continue to be allowed to park in the current commercial bus lot at CVIP, however, buses will only be able to access the CVIP area from the eastern entrance off South Entrance Road;
- the Grand Canyon Greenway from Yavapai Lodge to the Visitor Center area will be closed;
- the Kaibab Trail overflow parking lot, located south of the Visitor Center, will be closed;
- visitors in private vehicles will continue to be allowed to park at Mather Point with access from the east or west;
- through traffic to the Grand Canyon Village area will continue to flow through the Mather Point area;
- Grand Canyon's shuttle bus system will continue to serve the Visitor Center and the CVIP area, with the Village (Blue) Route stopping at the west CVIP shuttle bus stop and the Kaibab (Green) Route and the Tusayan (Purple) Route stopping at the east CVIP shuttle stop;
- visitors will continue to be able to access the Visitor Center and CVIP area by parking private vehicles at Mather Point and walking the short distance to the Visitor Center, or by parking at other south rim parking lots and taking the Village (Blue) Shuttle Route to the CVIP stop; and
- accessible parking spaces will be available in the Mather Point parking lot and an accessible shuttle will run daily from one-half hour before the Visitor Center opens until one-half hour after the Visitor Center closes.

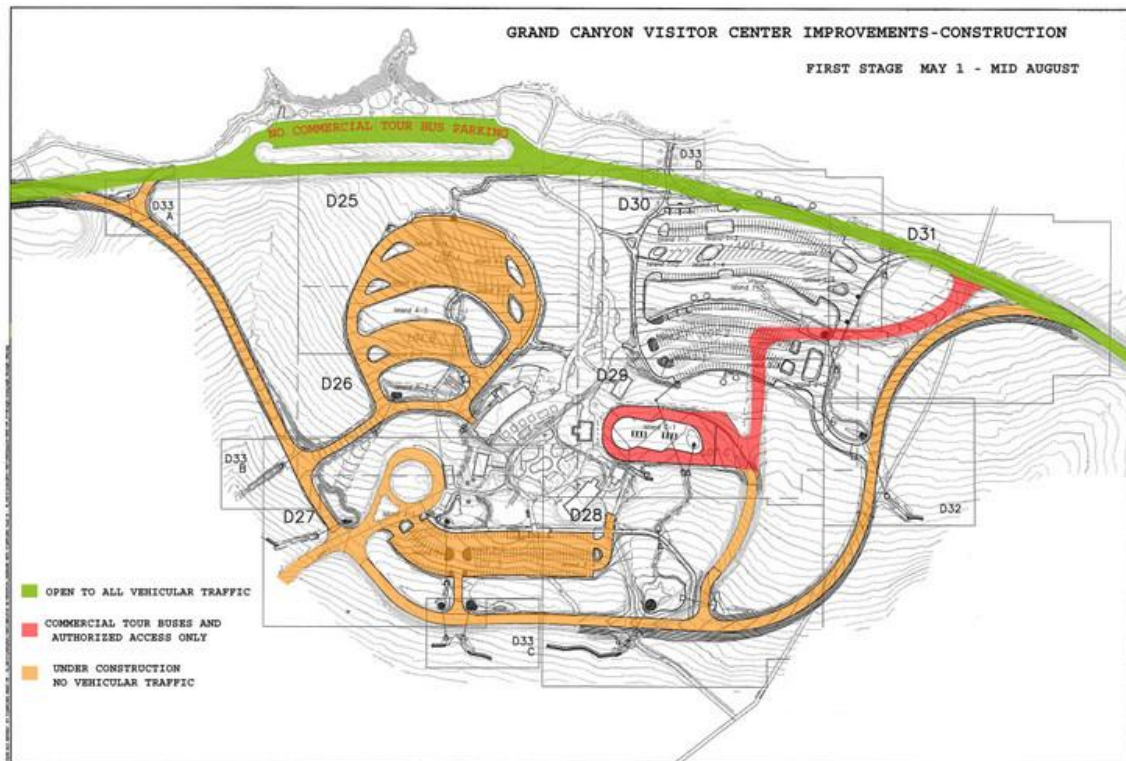
Stage 2 construction is expected to begin in August 2009 and to be completed in November 2009. (*See attached 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage map*). During Stage 2 construction:

- traffic will be diverted onto the new South Entrance Road alignment south of CVIP;
- commercial tour buses will park in the new permanent bus lot west of CVIP;
- the Kaibab Trail overflow parking lot, located south of the Visitor Center, will be open;
- accessible parking spaces allowing access to the Visitor Center and CVIP area will be available in the Kaibab Trail overflow parking lot;
- Grand Canyon's shuttle bus system will continue to serve the Visitor Center and the CVIP area, with all routes stopping at the west CVIP shuttle bus stop;
- visitors will continue to be able to access the Visitor Center and CVIP area by parking private vehicles at Mather Point and walking the short distance to the Visitor Center, however, all vehicular access to Mather Point will be from the west; and
- visitors will also continue to be able to access the Visitor Center and CVIP area or by parking at other south rim parking lots and taking the Village (Blue) Shuttle Route to the CVIP stop.

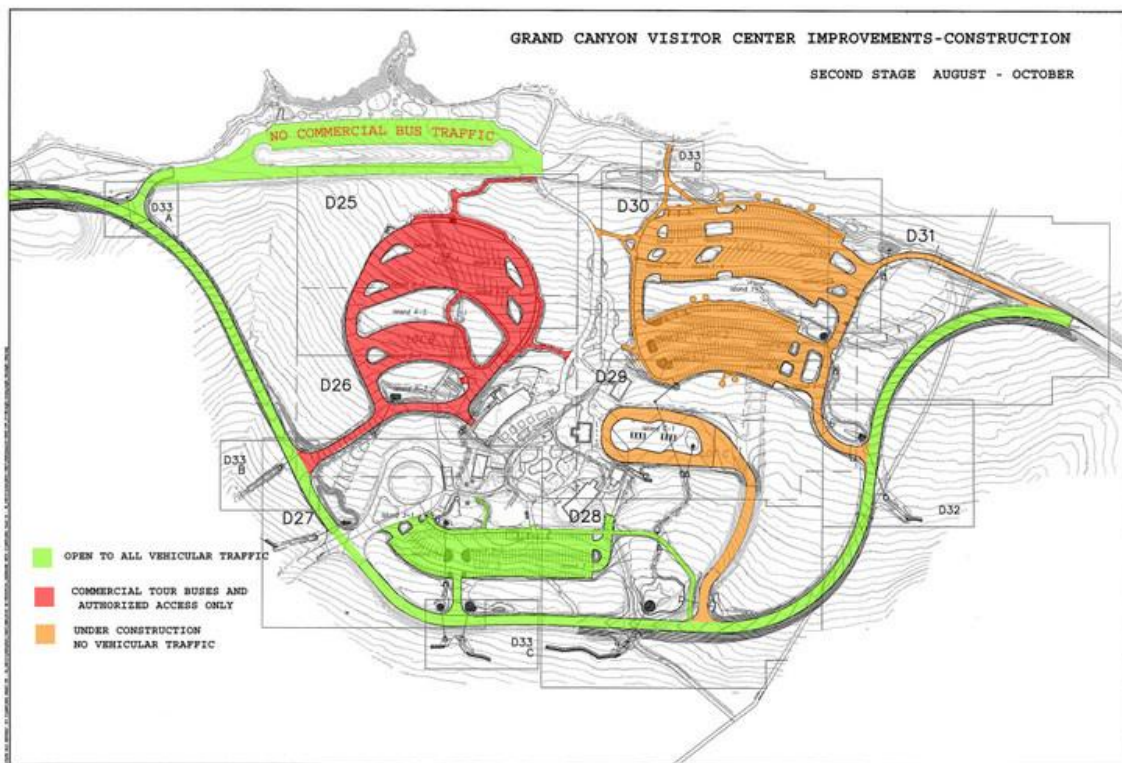
In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Park Service completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed in May 2008. Funding for this project is

being made available through entrance fees collected under the Federal Lands Recreation and Enhancement Act.

Up-to-date information on this project will be posted on the park's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/cvip90.htm>. For more information about the project, you may also call Vicky Stinson, Project Manager at 928-774-3026 or Shannan Marcak, Public Affairs Specialist at 928-638-7958.



**Stage 1 map** identifying primary traffic routes, commercial tour bus access to CVIP and areas under construction.



**Stage 2 map** identifying primary traffic routes, commercial tour bus access to CVIP and areas under construction.

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